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R 110221Z MAY 89
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7972
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
AMCONSUL SHENYANG
AMCONSUL CHENGDU (POUCH)

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E.O. 12256: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, PROV, PINK, CH
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MAY 8 MEETING WITH NPC
STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WAN LI

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR LILLEY MET WITH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC) STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WAN LI ON MAY 8 TO DISCUSS WAN'S UPCOMING TRIP TO THE US. THE AFFABLE CHAIRMAN WELCOMED THE NEW AMBASSADOR, CRACKED A JOKE ABOUT THE THREE GORGES PROJECT, AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO VISIT THE US. AMBASSADOR LILLEY REPLIED THAT WAN'S VISIT WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE THIS YEAR AND THAT PRESIDENT BUSH LOOKS FORWARD TO GREETING WAN IN WASHINGTON, BOTH FORMALLY AND ON THE TENNIS COURT.
END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR LILLEY PAID A 50 MINUTE COURTESY CALL ON WAN AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE ON THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 9. WAN OPENED BY JOKINGLY ASKING THE AMBASSADOR IF HE HAD ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO HANDLE THE THREE GORGES PROJECT. THIS PROJECT IS ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE WORLD DUE TO DISPUTES IN CHINA AND ABROAD OVER HOW TO BUILD THE DAM, WAN SAID. HE ADDED THAT THE CHINESE HAVE SPENT MORE THAN A DECADE CAREFULLY PLANNING THE PROJECT, BUT NOW IT MUST BE POSTPONED FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

3. THE CHAIRMAN THEN WARMLY WELCOMED THE NEW AMBASSADOR TO BEIJING AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS US TRIP. WAN STATED THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT A CHINESE OFFICIAL HAS BEEN INVITED TO THE US AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NPC STANDING COMMITTEE. THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT IS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN US-CHINA RELATIONS, WAN SAID. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR THAT HE HOPES TO MEET WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND TO DEEPEN RELATIONS BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE NPC. IT HAS BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE HIS LAST TRIP TO THE US, AND HE ALSO HOPES TO MEET WITH OLD FRIENDS AND RETRACE HIS STEPS. WAN SAID THAT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO MEETING PRESIDENT BUSH. THE PRESIDENT'S FRIENDSHIP TOWARD CHINA HAS MADE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RELATIONSHIP, THE CHAIRMAN SAID. HE ADDED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S FEBRUARY TRIP TO CHINA, TAKEN SOON AFTER HIS INAGURATION, WAS AN IMPORTANT INDICATION OF THE HIS REGARD FOR US-CHINA RELATIONS.

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4. AMBASSADOR LILLEY REPLIED THAT THE CHAIRMAN'S TRIP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VISIT TO THE US BY A HIGH-LEVEL CHINESE OFFICIAL THIS YEAR. PRESIDENT BUSH LOOKS FORWARD TO MEETING WAN IN WASHINGTON AND TO INTRODUCING HIM TO VICE PRESIDENT QUAYLE, THE AMBASSADOR SAID. AMBASSADOR LILLEY ADDED THAT THE PRESIDENT IS PRACTICING HARD FOR THEIR TENNIS MATCH. HE THEN BRIEFLY RAN DOWN WAN'S SCHEDULE IN THE US AND TOLD THE CHAIRMAN THAT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO ACCOMPANYING HIM THROUGHOUT THE TRIP. THE EMBASSY STANDS READY TO ASSIST WITH ANY REQUESTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE TRIP THAT WAN MAY HAVE, THE AMBASSADOR SAID.

BIO NOTE

5. WAN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE IS 73 YEARS OLD AND THAT HE WAS BORN IN DONGPING COUNTY, SHANDONG PROVINCE NEAR THE TOWN OF TAIAN. WAN IS HARD OF HEARING IN BOTH EARS AND STRAINED TO HEAR THE INTERPRETER CLEARLY THROUGHOUT THE MEETING. LILLEY

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RRS Date: 3-15-94

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